

## **Mrs Palin. First Baptised WCG member in Britain (1954)**

**1. The following encouraging information is extracted from a sermon presented by elder Robin Jones at the West Coast Church of God (Los Angeles), 2 March 2024.**

What I didn't know was that a certain Mrs. Palin from the town of Crewe, you've all heard of the town of Crewe, the railway junction, she was sitting in the audience and she had written in for baptism.

She was the first person to respond to that broadcast over Radio Luxembourg, writing in for baptism.

Now, although we didn't have an office in London, we had a mailing address and the letters were forwarded to Pasadena and Dick Armstrong was taking care of those things at the time.

So he had her request for baptism in his pocket.

And the next day, Mr. Armstrong with Dick and Rod Meredith drove out to Crewe.

It was a row of terraced cottages or row houses, you might say.

About 9.30 in the morning, Dick Armstrong knocked at the door, no reply.

He knocked again, no reply.

I guess we'll just have to go back, he said.

We haven't come all this way to give up, said Mr. Armstrong, and he went up and began to pound on the door, pound, pound, pound.

A voice from upstairs called out, I'm coming.

Mrs. Palin appeared at the door in a dressing gown or a house coat.

All she explained, Mr. Armstrong, I'm so sorry.

I was at your meeting last night.

I got home on the train about midnight and I'd been up all night reading my Bible.

I finally fell asleep a couple of hours ago and that pounding on the door woke me up.

Please come in.

She quickly dressed and asked about baptism.

And after a while, Mr. Armstrong said, you have very good understanding.

You should be baptized.

But I've got a question, she said.

How do I keep this feast of tabernacles?

Well, said Rod Meredith, you're going to have to start to save up.

But where do I go?

She said, well, it's quite a long way, said Rod Meredith.

But where do I go?

Well, he said, it's in Texas.

And she must have been absolutely staggered out of her.

Where?

This is 1950s and 1954.

Most people didn't travel very much.

Probably not more than one family in seven or eight had a car in England at that time.

Just a minute, Rod, said Mr. Armstrong, just a minute.

This is something I can see we have to study some more.

When we get back, I'm going to have our graduate class look into this.

When we get back to America, because I can see we do not fully understand this.

We've written articles, you see, to say we must go where God places his name.

We could see the scriptures and we'd assume that must be one place.

And the land would be donated partly to us there in Big Sandy.

So we wrote articles saying you must come to Big Sandy.

But Mr. Armstrong could see now this didn't make much sense.

He said, hold on, we're going to have to study this more to see what happens with people from other parts of the world.

Now, when her husband that evening, when her husband came in from work, he was very suspicious.

You are following a man, he said.

No, I'm not, I'm following the Bible.

You listen to this man on the radio, you read what he writes in his magazines, you get letters from him, then you go to his meeting in Manchester and now he's come to the house and baptized you for his son.

You are following a man.

I'm not, Mrs. Palin said, I'll prove it to you.

I will cancel everything, cancel all my literature.

I won't listen to the program.

I will just follow the Bible.

She wrote in to our address.

We had a BCM address.

It meant British commercial monomark.

So the address we used was BCM ambassador.

And those letters were all forwarded on.

However, we were going to establish an office in England.

And on that trip, when Mr. Armstrong had this meeting in Manchester and the other four cities, he established an office in London

and Dick Armstrong remained to be in charge.

So when she wrote in, he actually got the letter saying, take my name off the list, cancel everything.

An Australian student, Helen Birchell, I believe her name was, was working in the co-worker department at the office in Brickett Wood.

And she was cleaning out her desk, as some people like to do.

She pulled out the small top drawer.

And back of it, she found an old dirty four by six card, one of these file cards.

On it, it said, Mrs. Palin, member, Radio Church of God, 1954.

But the name was crossed out, and the entry was crossed out.

And over the top was written, membership withdrawn, send no more literature.

And so Helen found this card and thought, what on earth is this?

Member, Radio, what is it?

I'll send it up to Robin and Shirley Jones, up there in Manchester, they're visiting people.

So here, we got the letter with this dirty card in it, and we wondered, what is this?

What is this?

From 10 years before.

Wow.

Off we went to Crewe.

And what were we going to find?

We came to the terraced house, two doors beside each other, one for a downstairs apartment, one for the upstairs apartment.

Beside the door was a notice, hairdressing appointments taken.

Here's the number.

No appointments between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday.

Our hearts began to pound.

So excited.

We knocked, and Mrs. Palin came to the door.

I said, I represent the Plain Truth Magazine and Herbert Armstrong.

Please come in, she said, and she told us the story that I told you.

About the morning after the meeting, when she'd been up all night studying her Bible, Mr. Armstrong was there at the door with his son Dick and Rod Meredith.

And now she was baptized in the canal at the end of the road.

You really should plan to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, I said.

Yes, yes, I know.

She didn't tell us everything at first.

I know, but it's so expensive.

That's why I started the hairdressing business.

I thought maybe I could begin to save up enough.

It doesn't cost that much, I said.

And we could help you.

We could help you with a few pounds.

Oh, it may not sound much to you, but it's a lot to me, she said.

It's too much money, and it's so far.

Not really, I said.

It's not that far at all.

And she looked at me so puzzled.

What are you talking about?

I said, well, we've got a fecite down in Hailing Island near Portsmouth.

In this country, she said.

And I said, oh, I can still remember the expression on her face.

I thought I had to go to Texas.

Very, very unusual.

She started to attend our Manchester congregation.

Her husband, who was a Methodist, was very suspicious.

I'd like to go along and see what's going on in these meetings.

Maybe it's some kind of cult, he said.

So he attended once.

And then he said, I'd like to come again.

And he came a second time.

And then he came a third time.

And soon, he was coming every week.

And then he asked if he could be baptized.

He was a choir director, as it turned out.

And about six months later, he started a choir in the Manchester church, and we had our own choir for the first time.

Their daughter later attended Ambassador College.

And all because a woman was called by God and remained faithful.

Kind of like the work in the United States, isn't it?

Where one woman discovered the truth and her husband was determined to prove her wrong and found when he studied the Bible that she was right all along.

## **2. *The Autobiography of Herbert W Armstrong (Vol. 2, Chapter 63):***

"On Friday we drove back to London. We had a request from a lady at Crewe, home city of the Rolls-Royce factory, for baptism. So we drove by way of Crewe. She was Mrs. Edna Palin. We found that she operated a beauty shop for women in front of her home. We also met Mr. Palin and talked to him. We were satisfied that Mrs. Palin really was ready for baptism. She knew of a river—or, I believe probably more properly, an irrigation stream—some few miles from town. We drove there. And my son Richard David performed the very first baptismal service resulting from this Work on this side of the Atlantic. Later, after the Work was better established in Britain, Mr. Palin was baptized by one of our other ministers.

Returning to London, we had meetings scheduled in a very nice downtown hall for the following Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, September 21 to 23."

## **3. "The Feast: Around the world in eight days," *Worldwide News*, 13 Oct 1975, p. 8:**

"Britain

Almost 3,500 kept the Feast of Tabernacles at five locations in the British Isles this year. While in the past the whole British membership came to Minehead, England, for the Feast, this year Feastgoers used five resort areas...

Mr. Brown, business manager for the Work, delivered the first two sermons at the Welsh site. On Sept. 20 Mrs. Edna Palin, who was baptised by the late Ricchard Armtrong as the first, member of God's Church in England 21 years earlier to the day, was presented with a bouquet. She and her husband live in Crewe and attend church in Conway, four miles west of the Feast site."

#### **4. *The Incredible History of God's True Church* by Ivor Fletcher (chapter 14).**

"Shortly after the broadcast began on Radio Luxembourg, it became necessary to open an office in Britain to handle the mail response. In February, 1953, Dick Armstrong flew to London and arranged a mail address -- B.C.M. Ambassador, London, W. C. 1. He remained in Britain for several months, handling the mail.

For a time after this the British Monomark office forwarded the mail direct to Pasadena, but this proved an unsatisfactory, short term arrangement. It became essential that a permanent office be established in London, and that Mr. Armstrong should see for himself the plans that needed to be made to take care of the small but growing European Work.

Public meetings were held during 1954 in Belfast, Glasgow, Manchester and London, which gave Mr. Armstrong an opportunity to meet and address some of the World Tomorrow radio audience. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, along with their son Dick and Roderick Meredith, were able to do a little "sight seeing" in Britain and Europe as well as making arrangements for the promotion of the Work in those areas.

The public meetings in Britain drew crowds of up to 750 people, and the theme of the lectures was "What's Prophesied for Britain." During the visit Mrs. Edna Palin of Crewe was baptized by Dick Armstrong the first baptized Church member in Britain.

Very slowly the Work in Britain began to grow. A small church was established in London during 1956. As the radio program went out at 11:30 P.M.. (later changed to 6 P.M.), the response was poor. During 1957 a lecture series conducted by Mr. Meredith, and followed up by a period of intensive preaching and counseling, resulted in an increase in the church congregation to 30 people."